

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
MEDFORD DISTRICT

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

FOR

JACKSON COUNTY - BULLOCK ROAD EASEMENT
OR-110-99-19

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

EA COVER SHEET

Project Name/Number: OR 54601, OR-110-99-19

Location: Medford District Office

Preparer: Jim McConnell, Environmental Coordinator

<i><u>Interdisciplinary Team</u></i>	<i><u>Resource Values</u></i>
<u>Bob Walker</u>	<u>Forest Engineering</u>
<u>Matt Broyles</u>	<u>Wildlife, T&E Animals</u>
<u>Joan Seevers</u>	<u>T & E Plants</u>
<u>Dave Maurer</u>	<u>Soils</u>

Format/Adequacy:

Jim McConnell, EA Coordinator

This environmental assessment (EA) for the proposed construction of BLM access road from existing BLM easement OR 18204 (RE - 932) to BLM Medford District Office complex was prepared utilizing a systematic interdisciplinary approach integrating the natural and social sciences and the environmental design arts with planning and decision making.

Ron Wenker
Medford District Manager

Date

Chapter 1
NEED FOR THE PROPOSAL
and
ALTERNATIVES

NEED FOR THE PROPOSAL - On September 26, 1998, BLM determined the need for access into the Medford District Office Complex east parking lot by extending the existing OR 18204 (RE -M-932) road easement off Bullock Road., Township 37 South, Range 1 West, Section 7 (Tax Lot 400), Jackson County, Willamette Meridian, Oregon.

CONFORMANCE WITH LAND USE PLANS - This proposal is in conformance with the Medford District Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan (June 1995).

ALTERNATIVES

Alternative A -- PROPOSED ALTERNATIVE-

New road construction (approximately 639' length, 30' wide) which would extend BLM Road, OR 18204 (RE -M-932) to the Medford District Office complex east parking lot. Paving of the east parking lot would also take place.

Project Design Features

1. New road construction would be winterized by providing a well-drained roadway during construction and periods of use (minimize erosion).
2. A minimum of six inches of road material would be placed on the new road surface (minimize erosion).

Alternative B -- NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE

- Do not construct the road.

Chapter 2. Environmental Consequences

PROPOSED ACTION ALTERNATIVE - Road construction and pavement of parking lot.

1. Wildlife - After inspection of the area, no habitat was found that would indicate that wildlife surveys for the Endangered Species Act or Survey and Manage species would be necessary. Prior to activity on this parcel of land there were sharp-tailed snakes, which is an Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife sensitive species. However, upon inspection of the site recently, none of the woody debris that this species typically lives under was present.

2. Special Status Plants

The District Botanist has examined existing botany files and walked the areas where the tie road from the BLM parking lot will traverse to meet the access road to Bullock Road. No Special Status Plants will be adversely impacted by this project. The area has been heavily impacted in the recent past and is heavily infested with nonnative plant species. Although there seems to be an adjacent existing wetland in this area, it does not contain the associated species found with *Lomatium cookii*, the Federal Candidate 1 species found on the Agate Desert.

3. Fisheries

The project does not affect Federally listed or other special status species, (Coho Salmon, Klamath Steelhead).

4. Soils

This project consists of an addition of 639 feet of paved road surface and parking lot, 120 feet by 245 feet. The natural soil is Coker clay. This is a somewhat poorly drained, black, highly expansive clay. The surface is nearly level. Permeability and infiltration rates on Coker are very slow when the soil is fully swollen. This soil, where nearly level, is typical for wetland sites. The existing site has been disturbed to various degrees. The disturbance consists of fill with crushed rock and soil, blading, and plant removal.

Effects will include:

1) Replacement of 1.1 acres of very slowly permeable clay with 100% runoff, paved surface. The paved surface will be designed to drain into the city storm drain system. Though the soil has very slow infiltration properties, surface water under natural conditions would slowly make its way to low spots and drainage swales. Under existing conditions, similar drainage occurs with crushed rock and other fill media acting as surface inhibitors of surface flow to depressions. The overall change means an increase in rate at which runoff water gets to the natural stream system. This will cause slight increase in stream peak flows.

2) The runoff water from the new parking lot and road will contain small amounts of petroleum products. Heavy metals may also be contained within the sediment.

3) Will reduce natural water to soil contact and resulting soil organism relationships.

4) At the south side of the parking lot addition there is an open ditch that currently serves as a narrow wetland strip. This ditch has a very slow drainage rate due to a low gradient. Currently this ditch is performing as a wetland, it has a dense cover of wetland vegetation and it is being used by wildlife. By this action the ditch will be covered and replaced on the surface by an extended parking access road. This will eliminate existing remnants of a pre-existing wetland.

Mitigating Measure 1:

To mitigate for # 2 (above), provide a trap at the outlet end of the added storm drain system that would separate oil and sediment from the runoff water. This would be subject to regular inspection and maintenance as stipulated by the manufacturer.

Mitigating Measure 2:

To compensate for the loss of 1 acre of wetlands habitat, a larger approximately 32 acre parcel of land will be developed and protected as wetlands. This is on the North Fork of Big Butte Creek, in T. 35 S., R. 3 E., section 5.

Cumulative Effects

Existing cumulative effects for this area are high. Much wetland has been filled. Roads, parking lots, structures, and airport runways, taxiways, and apron area have all expanded in the recent past. Therefore the cumulative effects on soil and hydrology continue to increase. This is in the form of loss of soil/biological activity, increased additional surface runoff, increased stream peak flow, loss of wetlands, loss of ground water source. This proposal would add a very small increment to cumulative effects. The Medford District facility is located in a rapidly expanding, multi-ownership, part of the city of Medford, where control of the environmental effects of growth could only occur in a very comprehensive fashion. This kind of control is not in place at this time.

NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE

The no-action alternative would not have any new or cumulative impacts.

List of Agencies and Persons Consulted

Jackson County Planning Department

Public notice of the availability of this EA and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) was provided by advertisement in the Medford Mail Tribune and the BLM Medford District's central registration and recording system.